The politics of craft and working without skill: reconsidering craftsmanship and the community of practice

The Politics of Craft and Working Without Skill: reconsidering craftsmanship and the community of practice. In *Craft is Political: Economic, Social and Technological Contexts*, edited by D. Wood. London: Bloomsbury

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These days, "artisanal" and "craft" are everywhere. From cheese and beer to beauty products and landscaping services, in contemporary North American and Western European markets, these words now function as a shorthand to indicate goods that are ostensibly made in less mechanised forms of production than their industrially produced equivalents.[1] Although the exact measure of artisanal objects' "handmade-ness" is highly variable and often impossible to determine, the ability to position one's product as artisanally produced is lucrative in the 21st century.[2]

The renewed interest in craftwork is driven by particular emergent upper-middle class dispositions that lightly critique – but do not reject – industrial capitalism and mass manufacturing. These dispositions are marked by the cultivation of taste, expertise and aesthetics that generally relate to lifestyles and consumption, rather than individuals' political or working lives. At the heart of these perspectives is the implicit and explicit assumption that handmade products necessarily have a high level of quality, which derives from their maker's skilfulness and satisfaction with their work, thus making them worthy of higher prices.[3]

Craft, as it is colloquially understood, is therefore intimately connected to a particular ethics that places high value on producers' learned skills, abilities, thoughtfulness, and even pleasure.[4] This ethics is neatly illustrated by the way that we use the term "craftsmanship" to indicate precision, mastery and rigour, rather than simply the condition of working as a craftsperson, which is what the word grammatically suggests.[5] I want to draw attention to this semantic shift in this chapter. It is analytically important to do so, because this particular ethical understanding of craftsmanship has heavily influenced the way that craft scholars imagine the subject of our studies. We too tend to implicitly believe that handmade objects, food and drink are made through more satisfactory and less alienating processes than industrial goods.

As I will discuss, this development is perfectly understandable from the perspective of researchers. However, one consequence is that certain kinds of craftspeople become invisible when we only approach craft in this way – particularly those who work at lower ends of artisanal commodity markets. This invisibility is decidedly political in nature, in ways that go beyond just issues of representation: it reinforces hierarchies of power and value amongst producers by excluding those craftspeople who do not fit the archetype of the skilful, satisfied artisan. As these hierarchies also inform markets for craftwork, they directly affect artisans' livelihoods and well-being. As such, the semantic shift between craft as "something that is made by hand" and craft as "something that is made by hand that manifests skill, perception, and quality" engenders a political act.

In order to highlight the consequences of this slippage, I will focus here on the concepts of "craftsmanship" and the "community of practice" (CoP) because they have been so useful to us as analytic frames. I do not intend this as a critique of the CoP approach *per se*; rather, I use CoP as a foil to question what and whom gets missed when we imagine artisanship as an ethical condition of being rather than a category of person who makes things by hand. Drawing on long term ethnographic research that I conducted with woodcarvers in Oaxaca, Mexico, I will show how the CoP approach does not account for artisans whose personalities and conditions of work mean that they regularly work "without skill".[6] While most of the artisans I worked with enjoyed the rhythm and flow of their craft, there were a few who resisted these qualities of the work and at times resented the conditions of economy and chance that made craftwork their fate. Since they did not perceive their work as a satisfying engagement with materials and form, formulations of "craftsmanship" and the "community of practice" are not sufficient for understanding their experiences. I begin by exploring the ways that ethical understandings of craftmanship have influenced scholarly approaches to craft, and how the CoP approach reinforces the exclusion of certain kinds of artisans. I then present the cases of two artisans to highlight how their perceptions of their work are not reflected in the ideals of craftsmanship or the CoP formulation.

Craftsmanship and the Community of Practice

> "…the way [the old cabinetmaker] manages his budget, his time or his body, his use of language and choice of clothing are fully present in his ethic of scrupulous, impeccable craftsmanship and in the aesthetic of work for work's sake which leads him to measure the beauty of his products by the care and patience that have gone into them."[7]

This description by Pierre Bourdieu of the relationship between the cabinetmaker's *habitus* and his artisanal skill would not appear out of place if it had been written a century earlier by William Morris or John Ruskin. These Arts and Crafts thinkers sought to convince the public of the ethical value of craft by arguing that they were a true expression of "man's happiness in his labour."[8] While we may admire these thinkers for their desire for social justice, we need a broader and more critical view of the relationship between artisans and their works. What of the cabinetmakers who do not live their lives by an aesthetic of work for work's sake, yet still make cabinets?

It is not a coincidence that researchers of craft would be predisposed to find that skilled practices are intrinsically satisfying and engaging: as scholars we tend to be interested in those things that people themselves find interesting and worthwhile.[9] As Soumhya Venkatesan observes, studies of skill are most frequently focused on those skills that are valued by artisans and the larger societies in which they work, noting that this has given scholarly understandings of artisanal work a particular flavour of engaged consciousness and deep meaningfulness.[10] As researchers, we are also often drawn to topics that connect with our own personal interests and experiences. It is not surprising to discover that Trevor Marchand, who has produced fascinating ethnographies of building and carpentry in Yemen, Mali and the UK, has trained in architecture and carpentry.[11] Or that Richard Sennett, whose book *The Craftsman* has had wide general appeal beyond the academy, has played the piano and the cello since childhood.[12] It is not a stretch to see that because *we* find pleasure in skilled activity, we are interested in questions of skill itself and gravitate towards research participants who also take pleasure in their work. This synergy between researcher and

participant has been extremely productive: apprenticeship and co-authorship have become important research strategies, part of what Tim Ingold describes as "knowing from the inside."[13] In working alongside our research participants, rather than just observing their tasks, ethnographers of craft have made important insights into the cognitive, didactic, embodied and moral processes through which objects and artisans come into being.[14]

This emphasis on "making," rather than production, has been analytically as well as methodologically fruitful. It has allowed us to pry apart questions of materials from materiality; authorship from production; and the larger social experiences of artisanship from the *chaîne opératoire*.[15] The downside to such an approach is that the majority of current research has been about people who *want* to cultivate their skills and who enjoy doing their work.[16] For example, Sennett argues near the end of *The Craftsman* that nearly anyone can become a good craftsperson with sufficient work and attention, without ever asking in what circumstances people may not be able, or even want, to do so.[17] For Sennett, the opposite of skill is not an absence of skill, but the *coup de foudre*, the sudden inspiration.[18] This position is, in a sense, tautological, since both of these conditions assume an end-result of quality work and satisfaction for the maker (albeit by different paths); in choosing cases to study the nature of craftsmanship, Sennett only compares examples where craftsmanship is already evident to him.

A similar ethical position to that of craftsmanship discourses is also at the heart of the diverse analytical approaches that are now captured under the term "community of practice," or CoP.[19] In the past thirty years, CoP has become a foundational concept through

which scholars of craft understand the experience of mutual participation that develops among people as they learn, make and create together. As a theory of skill acquisition through collective experience, CoP is certainly not limited to the study of craft: it has been applied to such diverse groups of people as science teachers, public administrators, and American "nerd girls."[20] Coined by cognitive anthropologist Jean Lave and educational theorist Etienne Wenger in 1991, the term describes people who are engaged "in an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means for their lives and for their communities."[21] The utility of the concept for social theorists lies in the way it links an understanding of human relationships and sociality to a broadly conceived view of learning, one that extends well beyond formal classroom-like situations where individuals occupy clearly defined teaching and learning roles. Instead, it captures how people are brought together by a specific need, and how their work to resolve this need through collective learning creates bonds between them over time (causing them to become a "community"). The model then goes on to explore how these learning experiences and bonds of belonging dramatically influence the collective and individual practices of "community" members.[22]

Although Lave and Wenger recognise that power and "conditions of legitimacy" play a role in how communities of practice develop and change over time, as William Warner Wood has discussed, they have not investigated the implications of these for their model.[23] The CoP approach identifies its subjects of investigation by looking at circumstances where the "community" has already come into being, and works backwards to understand how they came together in the first place. In many ways, this is a necessity of the model itself, as it

may be impossible to predict where and when such organic communities of learning will develop. However, as with Sennett's understanding of craftsmanship, the result is a limited view of a given practice. The model cannot fully capture the experiences of those actors who are excluded from (or at least not wholly integrated into) the community of practice, since it is precisely *shared* learning and bonding that is the main interest of the CoP approach. Actors, practices, opinions and experiences that fall outside of these shared domains remain invisible.

In the case of craftwork, the artisanal community of practice is identified by looking for those artisans who endorse or at least acknowledge the norms, standards, aesthetics, and knowledge relating to production and marketing of that craft. Not all members of the community may meet its ideal standards, but they will acknowledge them, nonetheless. This delineation of the craft community may be sufficient in those artisanal fields where producers are primarily motivated by their personal interests, enthusiasm for, or "calling to" the craft.[24] However, in fields such as Oaxacan woodcarving, where most producers have become artisans, at least initially, out of economic necessity and lack of viable alternatives, it does not make sense to start from an assumption that all individuals working as artisans are accounted for by a CoP approach.

In the remainder of this chapter, I present two individuals from my larger ethnographic research with Oaxacan woodcarvers. As should be clear, my intention is not to suggest that their experiences are somehow representative of artisans working in Oaxacan woodcarving or larger fields of Mexican craft production. Instead, I want to highlight how their structural

positions and personal dispositions effectively make them invisible to analytic frameworks that imagine artisanship to be an ethical condition of being (someone who works with skill; a member of a community of practice) rather than just naming a person who makes things by hand. In drawing out these examples, I aim to show that such models of artisanship are not only analytically limiting but are also politically problematic, as those who do not already conform to archetypical ideas about artisans and craftwork become unrepresentable within them.

Working without skill in Oaxaca

Oaxacan woodcarvings, also known as *alebrijes*, provide a particularly good opportunity to investigate artisanal practices beyond those driven by an ethics of skill and collective learning. This is because, unlike some other forms of craftwork that are consumed through globalised art markets, the woodcarvings cannot be directly connected to long-standing traditions of cultural production.[25] Because of this, there are few fixed norms through which woodcarvings are made and there is no formal apprenticeship structure through which younger artisans learn their craft. The carvings are generally purchased by tourists, ethnic/folk art collectors and gallery owners from Mexico, Canada, and the United States; the character of these markets mean that Oaxacan woodcarving is for the most part aesthetically conservative.[26]

The village of San Martín Tilcajete, where I have conducted research since 2008, is one of three main communities in the Central Valleys region of Oaxaca where the woodcarvings

are produced. San Martín is arguably now the most successful of the villages, yet only very few families have been able to consolidate their work into a measure of financial stability. Many must combine income from woodcarving with other activities, such as running small corner shops, driving taxis, and working in the tourism service sector. While higher end producers are able to dedicate themselves exclusively to woodcarving, only one family has become truly economically secure through this work, and their success appears to their neighbours to be difficult, if not impossible, to replicate.[27] While woodcarving may not offer real security for most residents, sixty percent of the village's households are involved in their production.[28] This is not at all surprising given the lack of alternatives, a consequence of larger conditions of economic and social underdevelopment in the region: over fifty percent of households in San Martín are economically dependent on remittances from migrants who work in the United States, usually without visas.[29]

For those who wish to stay in Oaxaca, woodcarving appears to be one of the few options available that does not have significant educational or material barriers to entry. The costs of tools and materials are generally low; machetes and knives are common implements in all rural Oaxacan homes, and the wood, paint and insecticides needed are readily available, costing only a few pesos per figure. As San Martín Tilcajete is a craft community recognised and supported by the Oaxacan state, all villagers in principle can access the financial and marketing support that the state offers, without ever having their work inspected or evaluated.

I began to think about people who do unskillful work in the first few weeks of my research, when I was still getting to know the artisans and their families. I tried to make sense of the fact that some seemed disinterested in cultivating their artisanal skills. While this could simply be explained as a disheartening consequence of woodcarving being their only real economic option, it does not explain why many artisans who find themselves in difficult economic conditions remain interested in developing their skills and "take pride" in their work. One evening I visited the home of Catalina García, whose family owned the most successful workshop in San Martín.[30] I showed her some carvings I had bought throughout the day, and she picked up a small piece that had been made by Blanca Díaz, a woman whose workshop was close to the village's main square. Looking at the piece, Catalina pursed her lips and said that she was dismayed that Blanca "works without skill." This, she said, was not only bad for Blanca, but bad for everyone because it gave San Martín a bad name in the eyes of customers.

Blanca's work practices contrasted greatly with those of Catalina García and many of the other artisans in San Martín. Most of their workshops were quiet, orderly spaces where people concentrated on the tasks at hand. Although people often listened to raucous *banda* music on their radios, the football (soccer) was notably eschewed, as it was difficult to concentrate on the game and work at the same time. In contrast, Blanca's workshop had a small television in the corner and throughout the day neighbours would pop in for a chat and Blanca would wander in and out to buy soda, to make phone calls or to just stand in the sun. Each morning, her husband would give her a box of carvings that were ready to be painted, and she would line up ten to fifteen of approximately the same size on her bench

and choose three or four plastic bottles of acrylic paint from the shelf. Using one of these colours, she would paint all of the carvings with a basecoat before returning to the beginning of the line to begin the decoration, choosing from the other colours at random as she went along, all the while keeping an eye on the telenovelas on the TV.

As I did with other artisans whom I knew well, I would occasionally offer to help Blanca paint carvings as we talked, but on the third or fourth time I did so, she admonished me for being too slow, telling me that I wasted too much time on decorating. “Customers will buy these for fifty pesos, whether you spend five or fifteen minutes on them… it’s better to do them quickly and make more of them,” she explained. I asked Blanca if it bothered her to make lower quality pieces. She paused, perhaps a little offended, and told me that of course sometimes she prefers to take her time and work on a large piece, but that making quick little pieces does not affect her abilities: “I know I can paint well if I want to, but sometimes I have to paint quickly!”

While this might sound like a classic explanation of an “economically rational” actor, the truth was that Blanca’s workshop was always overflowing with finished pieces, and she never seemed under pressure to fulfil the orders that came in from wholesalers. Blanca was not really embarrassed or frustrated by working unskilfully and enjoyed the freedom, flexibility and pace that being an artisan in San Martín allowed her, especially compared to her previous work in a market stall in the nearby town of Ocotlán, which required her to rise early and work very hard all day. Blanca’s explanation of her work practices does not indicate that she was necessarily unskilled or desired to improve the quality of her work.

Rather, Blanca chose to complete her work without using time or finesse, and she did not work to develop her skills further.

Blanca's perspective on her work can be usefully compared with the case of Juan, who was an employee in the Garcías' workshop. Although he had worked for them for over four years, he had not developed his skills and had not moved on to the more difficult painting that his colleagues did. He preferred to do the preparation tasks of sanding and gluing. While this work was important to the production of the very expensive carvings made at the Garcías', it was not considered skilled in the same way as the work done by the carvers and painters. The Garcías often expressed disappointment about Juan's apparent complacency, especially since his father happened to be one of the first artisans in San Martín and was considered an expert carver.

One evening, when visiting his family home, I asked him why he preferred preparation work when most of the other painters tried to avoid it. He told me that he just did not like painting that much, that he didn't like how long it took, and he did not want the responsibility to decide how to paint the carvings. His mother Paula, who was cooking nearby scoffed, "You see, Alanna. It's that my son is very lazy. He prefers to do nothing at all!" While Paula characterised her son's working habits as laziness, his own explanation indicates that actually he prefers the character of the work involved in sanding and preparation to that of painting. Like Blanca, he desired a working life that did not revolve around the deep engagement with materials and form that highly skilled painting requires.

In fact, far from being lazy, Juan was keen to be involved in the more social side of the García's business; his decent level of spoken English allowed him to offer tours of the workshop when Miguel García was unavailable. He enjoyed chatting and interacting with tourists from all over the world and often charmed visitors into ordering carvings that were not yet even finished. One could say that he was working to cultivate his social or entrepreneurial skills in the place of his artisanal skills, but this was generally not recognised by others as a worthwhile activity, if it wasn't accompanied by skilled artisanal work.

Elsewhere, I have suggested that Blanca's and Juan's work practices evidence different "aesthetics of work" that are at play within the woodcarving workshops of San Martin Tilcajete.[31] I argued that this is important to understand because it indicates that not all artisans desire or pursue the experience of "material engagement" that Sennett and others identify as the affective core of craftsmanship. The recognition of skilful and unskilful work in San Martín Tilcajete can be seen to index different individuals' ideas about the nature of desirable work itself. In other contexts, such differences may lead people to choose different career or vocational paths, perhaps eventually finding work that is more appropriate and satisfying to them. However, in San Martín, where livelihood choices are extremely limited, making woodcarvings with skill appears as the most secure form of work that can be straightforwardly achieved, and hence is understood by many as superior to other modes of working.[32]

Although Blanca and Juan found ways to work that were agreeable to their own dispositions within the market for woodcarvings, these decisions had implications for them. Blanca's work did not attract higher-paying customers who looked for the particular qualities of "craftsmanship" discussed above, and she was not able to cultivate connections with important patrons like gallery owners and government officials who hold significant influence in the art worlds of Mexican craftwork.[33] Juan's reluctance to develop his artisanal skills meant that he was unlikely to secure higher wages at the García's' or to be able to strike out on his own by taking over his father's workshop. There were also political implications: in craft communities like San Martín, where access to outsiders and opportunities for promotion can affect the fortunes of most families, recognition in the markets for ethnic arts and crafts easily translates into authority and power at the village, family and interpersonal levels.[34]

While Oaxacan artisans' assessments of what constitutes "good" and "bad" artisanal work makes sense from their local on-the-ground perspectives, we should be aware of reinforcing such judgements in our scholarship. Analytical frameworks that emerge from what I have argued are essentially ethical positions about the value of craft, are unlikely to be able to take Blanca and Juan on their own terms. More critically, when we start from a position that craft is valuable because it is by its very nature something that is made with quality through shared skills and values, we dismiss Blanca and Juan and others like them from the category of "craftsperson." This not only impoverishes our ability to understand the nature of craft and artisanship, but also profoundly devalues the work and lives of people who make their living through producing objects by hand for national and global markets well beyond their

control. Although we as scholars of craft may be motivated by our own experiences and desires for skill and quality, we must pay more attention to whom gets left out – or pushed out – of our analytical frames. In paying closer attention to the politics of our own scholarly practices, we may be able to intervene in the political field of craft itself by making the practices of *all* artisans recognisable and valuable within a more inclusive perspective on "craftsmanship."

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[1] I thank D Wood, Méadhbh McIvor, Daniela Peluso, Andrew Sanchez and Miranda Sheild-Johansson for their insightful comments on versions of this text.

[2] Clare Wilkinson Weber and Alicia Ory DeNicola, 'Introduction: Taking stock of craft in anthropology,' in *Critical Craft: Technology, Globalization and Capitalism*, eds. Clare Wilkinson-Weber and Alicia Ory DeNicola. (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 1-16.

[3] Heather Paxson, *The Life of Cheese: Crafting food and value in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

Susan Terrio, 'Visions of Excess: Crafting good chocolate in France and the United States,' in *Critical Craft: Technology, Globalization and Capitalism*, eds. Clare Wilkinson-Weber and Alicia Ory DeNicola. (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 135-151.

[4] Frances Mascia-Lees, 'American Beauty: The Middle Class Arts and Crafts Revival in the United States,' in *Critical Craft: Technology, Globalization and Capitalism*, eds. Clare Wilkinson-Weber and Alicia Ory DeNicola. (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 57-77.

[5] Eileen Boris, 'Crafts Shop or Sweatshop? The Uses and Abuses of Craftsmanship in Twentieth Century America,' *Journal of Design History* Vol.2, No. 2/3 (1989).

Etymologically, the *-ship* suffix derives from proto-German through Old English, and until the 19th century only denoted a condition of being (as in "apprenticeship," the condition of being an apprentice), rather than any inherent qualities of the person; T.F. Hoad, ed. '-ship,' in *The Concise Dictionary of English Etymology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

[6] I conducted twenty months of research in San Martín Tilcajete, Oaxaca, Mexico from 2008-2009. This research was funded by the Emslie Horniman Fund from the Royal Anthropological Institute.

[7] Pierre Bourdieu *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* trans. Richard Nice. (Cambridge: Harvard College, and Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1984), p. 173.

[8] William Morris, "The Art of the People." In *On Art and Socialism*, ed. Norman Kelvin. (Mineola: Dover Publications, 1999 [1884]), 31.

[9] This is also in part the result of the languages we use: the contemporary meaning of the English word "craft" cannot be easily divorced from the broadly Marxist principles set out by the Arts and Crafts movement in England and the United States.

[10] Soumhya Venkatesan, 'Learning to Weave, Weaving to Learn… What?' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* Vol 16, No. S1 (2010), 173.

For a detailed critique of the material engagement concept, see Tom Yarrow and Sian Jones, "'Stone is Stone': Engagement and Detachment in the Craft of Conservation Masonry.' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* Vol 20, No 2 (2014).

[11] Trevor Marchand, *Minaret Building and Apprenticeship in Yemen* (Richmond: Curzon, 2001).

Trevor Marchand, 'Embodied Cognition and Communication: studies with British fine woodworkers, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* Vol 16, No 1 (2010).

[12]Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

Elizabeth Station, 'Life in Practice,' *The University of Chicago Magazine* Nov-Dec. 2011.

[13] Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (London: Routledge, 2013).

[14] Marchand, 'Embodied Cognition'.

Erin O'Connor, 'Embodied Knowledge: The Expert of Meaning and the Struggle Towards Proficiency in Glassblowing,' *Ethnography* Vol 6, No 2(2005).

Venkatesan, 'Learning to Weave'.

[15] Alanna Cant, ''Making' Labour in Mexican Artisanal Workshops,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* Vol 24, No S1 (2018).

Roy Dilley, 'The Visibility and Invisibility of Production among Senegalese Craftsmen,' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* Vol 10, No 4 (2004).

Michael Herzfeld, *The Body Impolitic: Artisans and Artifice in the Global Hierarchy of Value* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

Tim Ingold, 'Materials Against Materiality,' *Archaeological Dialogues* Vol 14, No 1 (2007).

Mira Mohsini, 'Crafting Muslim Artisans: Agency and Exclusion in India's Urban Crafts Communities' in *Critical Craft: Technology, Globalization and Capitalism*, eds. Clare Wilkinson-Weber and Alicia Ory DeNicola. (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 239-258.

[16] For a further critique of the "making" approach, see Cant, '"Making" Labour"**.**

[17] Sennett, *The Craftsman*, 268.

[18] Ibid*.,* 37.

[19] Andrew Cox, 'What are Communities of Practice? A comparative review of four seminal works,' *Journal of Information Science*, Vol 31, No 6 (2005).

[20] Rebecca Schneider, 'Science Teacher Educators as a Community of Practice', *Journal of Science Teacher Education* Vol. 18, No. 5 (2007).

Amy Smith, 'Knowledge By Association: Communities of Practice in Public Management', *Public Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 3 (Fall 2016).

Mary Bucholtz, '"Why Be Normal?": Language and Identity Practices in a Community of Nerd Girls' *Language in Society*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (June 1999), 203-223.

[21] Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[22] Ibid.

[23] W. Warner Wood, *Made in Mexico: Zapotec weavers and the global ethnic art market* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2008), 16-17.

Wood goes on to argue that the model can be bolstered by drawing on Bourdieu's work on 'fields' of social production, an approach I have found very useful in my own work.

[24] For an interesting example of this, see Dawn Nafus and Richard Beckwith, "Number in Craft: Situated Numbering Practices in Do-It-Yourself Sensor Systems," in *Critical Craft: Technology, Globalization and Capitalism*, eds. Clare Wilkinson-Weber and Alicia Ory DeNicola. (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 115-134.

[25] Michael Chibnik, *Crafting Tradition: The making and marketing of Oaxacan wood carvings.* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003).

[26] Alanna Cant, *The Value of Aesthetics: Oaxacan woodcarvers in global economies of culture.* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2019).

[27] Ibid.

[28] Figure based on a survey conducted March to April 2008.

[29] Jeffrey Cohen, *The Culture of Migration in Southern Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004).

Serena Eréndira Serrano Oswald, "Migration, Gender and Woodcarving in San Martín Tilcajete," in *Migration, Gender and Social Justice: Perspectives on human insecurity*, eds. Thanh-Dam Truong, Des Gasper, Jeff Handmaker and Sylvia I. Bergh (Heidelberg, New York and London: Springer, 2014), 177-192.

[30] All personal names are pseudonyms.

[31] Cant, *The Value of Aesthetics*, 50-67

[32] Ibid. This perspective is reinforced by markets that place value on particular aesthetics and artistic conventions, such as signatures. See Cant, '"Making" Labour'.

[33] See Chibnik, *Crafting Tradition* and Wood, *Made in Mexico.*

[34] Cant, *The Value of Aesthetics*, 68-84; 85-129.